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7 June 2023

The Honorable Henry E. Autrey
United States District Judge
111 S. 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63102

REF:

Brian M. Kowert
2332 Gateroyal Dr.
Des Peres, MO 63131
No. 4:22-CR-175-HEA

Dear Judge Autrey,

My name is D. Carter LaBarge and I have been a close friend and colleague of Brian Kowert for 50 years. Our small family business, LaBarge Products Inc. was an industrial and construction supply company located one block away from Brian's company, HBD. While I have been involved with contractors all my life, the last 25 years I have been directly involved with building heavy industrial factories both domestic and international.

For many years, Brian acted as the CPA for our family business and did taxes for me personally. It is noteworthy that as Brian reviewed our documents, he would always check our deductions and remove any line item that did not meet the criteria as a legitimate deduction. We relied on his knowledge and his counsel. Brian's advice on these matters has stayed with me to this day. He told me that if there is even the slightest question on the validity of a deduction, it should be withdrawn. He helped us as a company and me personally to do the right things. Per Brian, anything else is just not worth it.

On a professional level, Brian is a bright spot in the construction industry. Our industry and the work we perform is hard and the men and women we work with are tough. This is where Brian is the exception to the rule. Brian is a mild unassuming man. His demeanor is always quiet, thoughtful and pleasant with everyone he has ever met. Brian is not exactly what you would expect in our line of work. His genuine interest in every person he has ever worked with has earned him the respect and admiration of clients, colleagues and all of the craft folks that he came in contact with on a daily basis. The success of HBD is in no small part due to the fact that so many clients wanted Brian to run their work.

Brian has spent the last 49 years spending too many hours each day at work, I know, because when I would want to see him, I would always find him at his office, going

over project drawings and planning the next days activities. He has no hobbies that I know of and his only other nonwork activities are with his wife Karen and their children and grandchildren. He and his entire family belong to the Concordia Lutheran Church. Work, family and church encompass his entire life. There is nothing hidden away in the shadows, his life has been conducted in the light of day. Brian is a simple man that has spent his life taking care of others.

Brian has pleaded guilty and it is up to you to choose his penalty. If serving the good of the people is the goal, I am asking you to consider putting this man into a position where he can actually do some good for society. Brian's talents and abilities could be used to benefit so many others in some form of community service.

There is so much more to this kind soul than can be discovered in any documentation put before you. I am available for any additional questions that you or your staff might have on Brian Kowert.

Respectfully,

D. Carter LaBarge